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15 April 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT: COINS Pressures

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1. This memorandum, responding to a suggestion from the ADDI, summarizes proposals contained in four memoranda received during the past week by [] (CRS), CIA COINS Subsystem Manager, from [] CCINS Project Manager.

The following paragraphs discuss the implications of these new [] proposals for the DDI and CRS, and indicate my intended responses. The proposals are illustrative of the pressures executed on CIA by the COINS management and of the lack of thoughtful planning by that management. I have not presented alternatives, primarily because this memorandum already runs too long. I am available for discussion of any or all of the [] proposals if you wish to consider other responses or more details. The proposed negative responses to two of the four are also attached. Copies of this memorandum have been made available to [] for himself, []

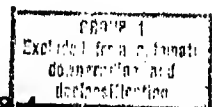
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2. COINS/139-70, Review of Data Bases in the COINS Experiment, 25 March 1970. (Attachment A)

a. Summary

This memorandum proposes that COINS files be evaluated by 1 July 1970 for their utility to COINS participants and for improvements that could be incorporated to give them greater utility. CIA is requested to appoint a study officer to examine COINS biographic files.

SECRET



SECRET

b. Comment

At a meeting with [] Mr. Eisenbeiss
[] it was agreed that CIA should cooperate in this study because it involves an evaluation of COINS utility and CIA feels that this type of evaluation should begin at once. A senior CRS biographic officer [] (CRS) was selected to perform this study. He was told to focus his attention on current COINS files and to avoid some of the issues raised by the NSA memo, e.g., what additional files need to be established for COINS and whether apparent duplicative file building efforts among agencies should be eliminated.

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3. COINS/144-70, Qualitative Review of the Substantive Information in COINS Files, 2 April 1970. (Attachment E)

a. Summary

This memorandum requests that specified agencies review named groups of COINS files for their accuracy, correctness, currency, and completeness. CIA is requested to review the military order of battle files (approximately six files).

b. Comment

(1) The requested review is duplicative and counterproductive. In the memorandum discussed above (Attachment A), DIA is requested to evaluate the utility of military order of battle files to COINS participating agencies. This is a logical assignment of responsibility and it should include an assessment of the accuracy, correctness, currency, and completeness of these files. It is illogical for CIA to undertake a concurrent, more narrow review.

(2) Further, this proposal requires that CIA (logically OSR) evaluate DIA and NSA work and report the findings to the COINS Project Manager, an NSA employee. This memoranda also charges NSA with evaluating the three CRS biographic files on the COINS system. CRS is concerned that this politically charged request could be counterproductive.

SECRET

SECRET

(3) CRS is also concerned because this evaluation is useful only under the assumption that the agency responsible for the creation of the file will modify it in accord with the findings of the evaluating agency. Under this assumption, CRS would face an open-ended task of monumental size in providing automated biographic data at the behest of other agencies despite the fact that those agencies have already stated that CRS's COINS files are only of marginal value. I recommend a negative position on this proposal. (Attachment B2)

4. COINS/146-70, Proposal for an Experimental Biographic Requirements File, 3 April 1970. (Attachment C)

a. Summary

This memorandum proposes the creation of a CCINS machine file to give "requests or requirements (for biographic information) the broadest possible dissemination" and to provide "a focal point for collecting outstanding, unanswered requests or requirements." The file would provide COINS users with information concerning others in the USIB community interested in particular biographic information.

b. Comment

(1) This proposal is vague, poorly conceived, and lacking in essential detail. Implementation would fall primarily on CIA/CRS, NSA—to the degree that their biographic efforts are not transferred to CRS, and DIA. The cost to CRS would be significant and open-ended but is presently unmeasurable. In 1969 CRS received some 25,000 requests for biographic data and produced from 10,500 written biographic reports in a variety of formats. Assumption of NSA biographic support might add from 10,000 to 15,000 requests annually. The costs to CRS would include:

- Detailed record keeping by the CRS country analyst on the data listed in Paragraph 1 of Attachment C.

SECRET

SECRET

(Such information is presently maintained in much less detail. If a telephonic answer satisfies the user and if limited time is required to dig up the answer, the CRS record now consists of only a count.)

- The data would have to be recorded in a machine-readable form. Assuming a 35,000 annual request level, the recording would involve some 160 records per day or the full time of at least one clerk typist or key punch operator.
- A software package would be required at an unknown cost. The unspecified, open-ended nature of Item 1g (type of information desired) could make the software cost and the costs of the subsequent items indeed heavy.
- The file would probably require space on direct access storage equipment in CRS and daily or weekly computer time for updating and maintenance.
- The file would require storage space and operational time in the CCS computer supporting COINS.

(2) The proposed file would make absolutely no direct contribution to the production of finished intelligence. Even an indirect contribution is not easily perceived. The value of the file, if any, would consist of the light that might be shed on the intra-Community use of biographic information. Such insight, in my view, would not be worth its cost, is already evident in most cases and in some would be sensitive information inappropriate for dissemination. This information has never been considered of sufficient value to warrant collection and does not now appear necessary in this current period of budgetary stringency. I intend to respond negatively to this proposal.
(Attachment C2)

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5. COINS/145-70, Proposal for Including Working Files in COINS,
2 April 1970. (Attachment D)

a. Summary

25X1 The NSA member of the Joint SIC/EIC Computer Working
Group talked [] concerning whether COINS could
25X1 assist in providing data on foreign computer developments.
[] then briefed the Working Group on COINS and later
proposed (Attachment D) that various machine files be established
to support the Working Group.

b. Comments

25X1 (1) [] has discussed this proposal with Dr. Herbert
Rothenberg, OSI, Chairman of the Working Group, and Norman Davis,
OSI, a member of the Working Group. Both expressed interest that
someone should volunteer to assist them, but they were very
skeptical that COINS could help them, i.e., that it would prove
superior to current "shoebox" files. Neither is willing to provide
manpower support to the project. Attachment D is now circulating
among Working Group members.

(2) If the Working Group takes a positive attitude toward
this project, CRS would undoubtedly be requested to assist Agency
analysts in file building activities. (The only known machine file
in this area is maintained by [] OER, a member of
the Working Group who maintains a file on computer organizations.)
If this happens, CRS would take the position that the concerned analysts
should be willing to devote a major effort to establishing the machine
files and that CRS should take an advisory role regarding indexing,
coding, formatting, etc.

6. As noted above, we have agreed to cooperate on one proposal,
we plan to respond negatively on two, and we will take a wait and see
attitude on the last memorandum. The proposals contained in the attached
memoranda are typical of the types of proposals that emanate from the NSA

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COINS Project Office though it is somewhat atypical to receive so many within a short period. They may give you a feel for some of the problems we are encountering in the COINS project and our reaction partially explains why CIA is accused of being negative on COINS matters.

[Redacted Signature]

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JOHN K. VANCE
Director, Central Reference Service

Attachments: a/s

CONCUR:

[Redacted Signature]

for R. J. SMITH
Deputy Director for Intelligence

21 April 70
Date

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